

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2568

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINR, KS, KN

SUBJECT: NORTH KOREAN SPY RING

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: KCIA ANNOUNCES EXPOSURE 11 MAN "SPY RING". PRESS HAS STRESSED LESSON THAT THREAT OF NORTHERN SUBVERSION REMAINS UNDIMINISHED. KCIA APPEARS CONFIDENT CASE IS STRONG. END SUMMARY

1. LEAD STORY IN ALL MARCH 25 SEOUL PRESS WAS KCIA ARREST OF 11 MAN SPY RING ALLEGEDLY LED BY JAPAN-RESIDENT KOREAN KANG U-KYU (60), ORIGINALLY FROM CHEJU-DO, AND NOW AUDITOR FOR JAPANESE COMPANY WITH SMALL TRADING BRANCH IN SEOUL. GROUP DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY WELL-KNOWN FIGURE; ONLY IDENTIFIABLE COMMON DENOMINATORS ARE CHEJU-DO ORIGIN AND/OR SMALL BUSINESS AFFILIATION OF MANH.

2. KCIA PRESS RELEASE CHARGES KANG HAS ASSOCIATED WITH CHOCHONGNYON (NORTH KOREAN RESIDENTS IN JAPAN) SINCE 1969, AND THAT HE TRAVELED TO PYONGYANG IN JULY 1974 WHERE HE MET KIM IL-SONG. KIM ALLEGEDLY INSTRUCTED
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HIM TO MAKE CONTACTS IN SOUTH KOREA FOR PURPOSE OF FORMING "ANTI-YUSHIN RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY" UNDERGROUND GROUP IN HOPES OF FOMENTING DISORDER SIMILAR TO THAT OF APRIL 19 STUDENT UPRISING. KCIA ALSO SAYS KANG, AIDED BY SOME OTHERS OF GROUP, COLLECTED INFORMATION ON DEPLOYMENT MILITARY FORCES IN COASTAL AND FORWARD AREAS. KCIA REPORTEDLY SEIZED 15 MILLION WON (ABOUT \$30,000)

"OPERATION FUNDS" AT TIME OF KANG'S ARREST, AND CHARGES
SOME MEMBERS OF GROUP RECEIVED PAYOFFS AND GIFTS FROM
KANG.

3. FINALLY, KCIA SAYS KANG ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESSFULLY IN
1973 BEFORE PYONGYANG TRIP TO ENLIST SUPPORT (NOT
FURTHER SPECIFIED) FROM THREE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
REPRESENTATIVES FROM CHEJU-DO: MESSRS. HONG, HYON,
AND YANG (NOT FURTHER IDENTIFIED, AND NOT CHARGED).
EMBASSY RECORDS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP INDICATE
THEY ARE LIKELY HONG PYONG-CH'OL (DRP), HYON O-PONG
(EX-DRP, NOW YUJONG-HOE), AND YANG CHONG-KYU (INDEPENDENT).
HONG IS ALREADY SERVING PRISON SENTENCE FOR BRIBERY IN
CONNECTION MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE SCANDAL LAST FALL.

4. PRESS REPORTING HAS BEEN THOROUGH AND FACTUAL, FOR
THE MOST PART FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING KCIA'S PRINTED PRESS
RELEASE. ALL PAPERS PROMPTLY WROTE EDITORIALS STRESSING
CONTINUED THREAT OF NORTHERN SUBVERSION. SOME EDITORIALS
EXPRESSED CONCERN AT USE OF JAPANESE BUSINESS AS COVER BY
SPIES. ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS ALSO JABBED BRIEFLY AT
TROOP WITHDRAWAL ANGLE, KOREA HERALD CLAIMING WITHDRAWAL
COULD RAISE KIM IL-SONG'S HOPES AND ENCOURAGE HIM TO
SEND MORE SPIES; KOREA TIMES IMPLYING AMERICANS WOULD
BETTER UNDERSTAND KOREAN CONCERNS IF RUSSIANS WERE
RUNNING SPIES TO U.S. THROUGH CANADA. KOREAN LANGUAGE
EDITORIALS REFRAINED COMPLETELY FROM SUCH ASSERTIONS.

5. KCIA ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE WITH LITTLE ADVANCE NOTICE.
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KCIA APPARENTLY FEELS IT HAS SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF SPYING
AND HAS PROMISED TO MAKE AVAILABLE ADDITIONAL DETAILS
ABOUT INVESTIGATION. ON BASIS SPARSE INFORMATION SO
FAR, EMBASSY SEES NO REASON FOR DOUBTING AUTHENTICITY OF
CHARGES.
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